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Michael Diffin

Chapter 5 in Integrating Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design concentrates mainly on how to use these to assess evidence of learning. The first step in integrating these into finding evidence is looking to what the desired evidence is. There is always a desire to prove that the students learned what you were teaching them. There are three ideas that teachers should work with in order to facilitate better learning based on the desired results. The first is a single test at the end of the semester is not as good of an assessment of the students learning as a full range of assignments spread out would be. There are many consequences to using one test at the end. These consequences include: class often just becomes a test prep, things that are important to the education of the students are neglected, not every child learns everything the same, and tests favor students who are particularly gifted with good recall over everything

else. There are many other ways to gather learning in the classroom however: there can be many tests, oral responses can change it up for the children who learn better that way, visual assessment or demonstrations are other ways to include more students, etc. the second idea that should be considered is to match what needs to be done in the classroom with how we get to learning those things. The GRASPS idea is a good way to find performances of understanding: goals, roles, audience, situation, products, and standards. The third idea is what is the function of these exams? There are several different functions to all types of exams.

Cheyenne

The fifth chapter of the book *Understand by Design* focuses on assessment. It tells us how to use assessments effectively in testing students' skills, abilities, and knowledge. The concept of multiple assessments stuck out to me, I agreed with the author's idea of the single snapshot versus an entire album of photos. Much like a single photo can capture you at just the right moment to make you look like a model, it can also catch you at the right moment where you look as though you just woke up after someone smacked you in the face with a book. Assessments are similar in that they can catch you on a good day where you know the answer to every question in the entire world, as well as they can catch you on the day that your brain has seemed to just check out. I understand that as a teacher it is my idea to know and understand that each of my students can and most likely will have different learning styles from one another. I must master being able to create lessons and assessments that all of my students will flourish with as well as struggle with. I personally think that sometimes a challenge can be a good thing, however, that is my learning style. Knowing that some students may struggle and have a truly hard time because of this I must also think of ways to help the struggling students. Not all assessments are going to be tests, some will be projects (individual or group) and some might be writing an essay, which I can help students with if they need it.

Ashley Godbout

Chapter 5 of *Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design* focuses on assessment and how to effectively use assessments to test understanding of student knowledge. I liked the analogy the authors used to explain why to consider more than one measure of assessment. A photo book reveals a lot about a person rather than one snapshot; the same is true for assessments. One assessment isn't going to provide a complete picture of what the student has learned compared to a variety of sources as evidence.

Assessments should be used to measure a given goal. For example, if the goal is something that students should know and understand (declarative knowledge) then test questions including multiple choice, matching, or true/false would be appropriate. However, when goals involve what students should be able to do (procedural knowledge) performance assessments should be given to test for skills in writing or drawing. Goals should be the driving force of assessments. Teachers shouldn't have students apply memorized responses but rather have them apply what they know to new situations. The author says, "when students are able to apply their learning thoughtfully and flexibly, true understanding is demonstrated." (67). it's important to realize that when students are given an opportunity to personalize their response they can still meet required components and meet standards without standardization. Pre-assessments and formative assessments are extremely important to the success of a classroom. This will impact my classroom because using a diagnostic assessment will help to plan lessons based on the

level of students knowledge and understanding and formative assessments will help track and guide their progress. If a teacher waits until the end of a unit to test what students have learned it's too late.

Tyler Michaud

The fifth chapter of *Integrating Differentiated Instruction + Understanding by Design*, by Carol Ann Tomlinson and Jay McTighe, focused on assessments; also, the various forms of knowledge that one must understand to properly assess. Many different knowledges exist and should be known by teachers, some of these include: declarative knowledge (any pre-existing understanding), procedural knowledge (how the knowledge is/should be applied), and disposition (feelings or connections to the content). All of the aforementioned knowledges can impact the classrooms interest and success. In addition, much like Rick Wormelli, the author of *Fair Isn't Always Equal*, this text emphasizes that assessments are only useful if the teacher uses them to better the classes understanding. A good teacher will work with the students, based on their assessments, to develop differentiated instruction that will improve the class. As a teacher, I know that I will apply the above information willfully and happily. I agree completely that assessments are only helpful when used by the instructor to better the class. Too often I have had teachers that assume that class-wide failure is result of terrible students, but in general I think that class-wide failure is a better reflection of lackluster instruction. Using assessments as a tool to assess growth is smart and I will definitely implement it (as for [heavily] graded assessments I am still in the air). For example, by using pre-assessments the teacher can develop a greater understanding of the level of pre-existing knowledge that will impact the pace of a lesson. Additionally, by implementing formative assessments a greater idea of what lessons were successful, and which were not, can be attained.

Matt Potter

In Chapter five the approach of assessment comes into play. Assessment helps us answer important questions. With assessment we can decide whether or not our students have a true, enduring understanding. Assessment must be preformed effectively however. The author talks about the photo album versus the snapshot principle. Students need multiple measures when learning. No one quiz, or one test will suffice for students learning. They need to learn one thing in several different ways. As teachers we have to consider this greatly; we must teach students using many styles. As we know kids don't all learn in the same ways, so we must cater to that. Teaching and assessing in one way is becoming more ineffective.

As a student, and a teacher I disagree with some things that are happening in schools. Take the SATs for example, we rely so heavily on this assessment and as a state and country we make "high stake" decisions based on a students score. I feel the so-called weight of this test has become so ineffective and detrimental toward the current students in this country. Teachers are being pressured to improve their students test scores, and in turn they teach to the test. This improves scores but it ultimately hurts the students and narrows the curriculum. I feel the authors and many people in today's society agree with this, but yet here we are, still doing things that don't play to the advantage of the students. I'm confused to as why we continue the way we are. Colleges in all areas of the country have stopped putting as much consideration into the SAT scores of students and are focusing more on their academics as a whole. I feel this is a good example as to how we can't use one way of assessment, because it simply does not do it all. As a teacher I

will use multiple approaches when teaching and assessing my students, as I understand all students learn, and prove their understandings in different ways. I will work hard to ensure all my students develop an enduring understanding in all that I teach.

Ashley Libby

This chapter emphasized that teachers must know how their students are doing in their classroom at all times. The students need to also know how they are doing so that they can improve. Assessments have been proven to be one of the best indicators on how well students know and understand the material being taught to them. There are many different types of assessment and there are some that are thought to be “one size fits all” but that is actually a false accusation. No one student learns exactly the same so why should we assess them all the same? If teachers use diverse and more personalized ways to assess their students than they can get a more accurate of their student’s progress. Having one big test at the end of the year will not be able to show if the student truly understood what was being taught to them. Having multiple assessments throughout the year will give the teacher an opportunity to see if their teaching method is working or if it needs modifications. This way the students are given multiple times to show their understanding and multiple times to make up for it. If students are expected to succeed in the classroom than they need to know what is expected of them. Having established goals helps both the teacher and the student. The student will know what they are supposed to accomplish and the teacher will be able to grade every student evenly according to the goals.

As a teacher I need to understand that every student learns differently. If I know how my students are progressing than I can modify my teachings to make sure they succeed in my classroom. I must give my students multiple opportunities to show me that they have learned what I have taught them and that they can apply that learning to real-world situations and problems. It is important that I know how my students are doing but it is equally as important that my students know how they are doing in my classroom. There is no way a student can progress unless they are given appropriate feedback showing their strengths and weaknesses. All of this is to ensure student understanding and success in the classroom.

Christopher Vogel

Chapter five discussed the different ways to properly assess both the students’ and the teacher’s learning and understanding. The key component the chapter was trying to bring across is that multiple sources of information are required to assess a students learning. A written test is only one possible source and provides a “snap shot” of the student’s understanding. The book wants assessment that uses multiple sources like demonstrations, projects, portfolios and observation to provide a “photo album.” This photo album would provide a more accurate understanding of a student’s ability and skill. The book differentiates drills and authentic work. Drills help reinforce basic skills into the students. Authentic work allows for students to put their skills to the test on real world issues. Both are necessary to help students meet the goals stated in the class. When tailoring assessment it is critical that the work is not overly complex. UbD/DI explains that asking students to do a PowerPoint is ineffective if a multiple choice exam would provide the same information.

Because this chapter puts emphasis on choosing a broad range of assessment, I am trying to think of different ways of getting my portfolio. I know that when I was growing up, many of the stories I heard about college involved one big test and that is the only grade I will get (and a few classes now that is true). However, for the most part my classes have included presentations or other alternative assignments.

For my future classroom I intend to use the definition the book has for drills and authentic work and build a class assignment around the framework.

Cole Phillips

Tomlinson's and McTighe's *Integrating Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design* talks, in chapter five, extensively about assessment and how best to assess through differentiated means.

While McTighe and Tomlinson differ in explanation to Rick Wormeli, similar ideas are present throughout the chapters. Both chapters stress the need for both student and instructor assessment, and that both must be done regularly. It compares assessments to photographs, describing one snapshot as being far less telling than a whole book of photos. Regular assessment, again, is stressed, but, unlike in Wormeli's work, the chapter makes a focus out of reliance on more than one form of assessment. The chapter describes written assignments as, merely, one type of assessment and suggests that instructors go about assessment creatively, utilizing projects, posters, presentations, etc... to keep the content both understandable and enjoyable.

The chapter emphasized that teachers must have an understanding of how each student is learning and whether or not each student is succeeding, but it also talks about how assessment is reflective for a student and encourages knowledge of a student's self. I find the latter concept a bit too forgiving. A student knows whether he or she understands the concepts presented with or without assessment about ninety-nine percent of the time. A teacher, however, may not. Assessments are primarily for the sake of teacher and his or her ability to better understand whether or not the course is effective, and what he or she may need to focus on in order to better the course if it is not proving effective.

Meghan Hughes

There are specific intentions of standardized tests. Standardized tests are intended to answer assessment questions, but they almost always fall short. Teachers really want to know how the students learn the information and what the varying needs of students are in the classroom. The author establishes three key guidelines to look at when discussing classroom assessment. The first principle is the idea to consider a "photo album versus snapshots" (60). This means that one should look at a student's collection of work, or work over a period of time, as opposed to looking at one specific document as a form of assessment. This is important because it is virtually impossible for one test to examine and assess all levels of intelligence of all students. There is a major problem with the amount of pressure and emphasis that is placed on *one* test in current education. Another key principle is to examine multiple types of educational goals. This also refers to how we use the information we are given through assessment to enhance the production in the classroom. It is important that the results of assessment are appropriate to what needs to be taught and what needs to be improved in the classroom. Another principle revolves around the idea that the assessment should be linear to the information we are attempting to teach in the classroom. Students will respond better when they understand that what they are doing has a purpose, and is relevant to the their lives as a whole.

Tyler Brown

Understanding how to effectively assess student performance is a concept that I have been inwardly concerned about when reflecting on what my strengths and weaknesses of an educator may be. In my own experience, I happened to be one of the lucky ones that performed well on traditional academic tests, so I have had less of a reason to reflect on the negative aspects of one-dimensional testing or reasons to avoid it. That being said, I was able to take a lot from this chapter about the different facets of assessment and how to avoid the pitfalls of relying on exclusively “summative assessments”. The example of using “photo albums” rather than “snapshots” to offer meaningful assessments is a great analogy outlining the major concept of this chapter. By incorporating a balance of diagnostic (before curriculum), formative (during), and summative (after) assessments, one is more able to get a full view of where the individual students have progressed in relation to the goals set during the introductory stage (stage 1). I think that anybody who shared my fear of understanding assessment benefits from the way this chapter outlines a comprehensive and meaningful way of HOW to assess differentially while also illustrating examples of common mistakes that offer reasons WHY differentiating assessment is so important.

Devin Boilard

Chapter Five works as an introduction to an essential part of the equation, assessment. The authors work hard to express three major themes that should be followed when tackling the art of assessment. First teachers should stray from administering the textbook test that encompasses an entire unit of content, rather than putting full faith in this one reflection of knowledge, teachers should continually track the student’s growth and stagnation throughout the learning process. Secondly, the assessment should coincide with the question; it is here the authors bring into play the UbD approach. By using the goals set in Stage 1 as a guide one can develop a means to appropriately assess what a student needs to produce knowledge of, whether it be declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, or disposition. Lastly we need to ask ourselves the purpose of the assessment. To answer this question the authors offer three categories of separation. Summative, these are formal assessments that test for a cumulative knowledge of a topic and carry weighted grades. Formative, these assessments can be both formal and informal which allows them to be numerous in nature, therefore offering numerous “snapshots” to add to the “photo album” of assessment; they do not carry grades. Diagnostic, these are ungraded evaluations that allow teachers to gain an idea of a student’s initial standing on the subject matter and their capabilities.

I was a little disheartened when reading the introduction of this chapter and coming across the line “Anyone concerned about teaching and learning is automatically interested in assessment” (59). I will stand as the exception to the rule. I don’t know why the topic of assessment has escaped my exploration of the field but alas it has always avoided my interest; my mind wanders to the challenges of making units and lessons so riveting and enticing that learning is inevitable. This chapter has done me well to bring the role of assessor into my focus and give value to its presence. While I was at first overwhelmed by the complexity of the situation I have been quick to change my mindset to that of intrigue. I am excited to see that there are methods of assessment that are breaking the mold and that opportunities are arising for students to express themselves in a manner that suits them personally. I am an easy sell on this pitch and can see why the studies on multiply intelligence should be influential in this matter as well. I see a lot of worth in framing assessments tasks with GRASPS and having unknowingly already experienced and seen great success with its implementation. This will be a feature in my classroom.
